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THE STOLEN BANK NOTES

sign of weakening. His wife, meanwhile, had been apprehended and subjected to the third degree. When this ordeal was over Detective Mallory was convinced that she had had nothing whatever to do with the robbery, and had not the faintest idea where the money was. Half a dozen times Dolan asked permission to see her or write to her. Each time the request was curtly refused.

Newspaper men, with and without inspiration, had sought the money vainly; and the police were now seeking to trace the movements of Mort Dolan from the moment of the robbery until the moment of his appearance on the steps of the house where he lived. In this way they hoped to get an inkling of where the money had been hidden, for the idea of the money being in the flat had been abandoned. Dolan simply wouldn't say anything. Finally, one day, Hutchinson Hatch, reporter, made an exhaustive search of Dolan's flat for the fourth time, then went to police headquarters to talk it over with Mallory. While there President Ashe and two directors of the victimized bank appeared. They were worried.

"Is there any trace of the money?" asked Ashe.

"Not yet," responded Detective Mallory.

"Well, could we talk to Dolan a few minutes?"

"If we didn't get anything out of him, you won't," said the detective; "but it won't do any harm. Come along."

Dolan didn't seem particularly glad to see them. He came to the bars of his cell and peered through. It was only when Ashe was introduced to him as the president of the Thirtieth National that he seemed to take any interest in his visitors. This interest took the form of a grin. Ashe evidently had something of importance on his mind and was seeking the happiest method of expression. Once or twice he spoke aside to his companions, and Dolan watched them curiously. At last he turned to the prisoner.

"You admit that you robbed the bank?" he asked.

"There's no need of denying it," replied Dolan.

"Well," and Ashe hesitated a moment, "the board of directors held a meeting this morning, and speaking on their behalf I want to say something. If you will inform us of the whereabouts of the money, we shall, upon its recovery, exert every effort within our power to have your sentence cut in half. In other words, as I understand it, you have given the police no trouble, you have confessed the crime, and this, with the return of the money, should weigh for you when sentence is pronounced. Say the maximum is twenty years, we might be able to get you off with ten if we get the money."

Detective Mallory looked doubtful. He realized, perhaps, the futility of such a promise, yet he was silent. The proposition might draw out something or other on which to proceed.

"Can't see it," said Dolan at last. "It's this way. I'm twenty-seven years old. I'll get twenty years. About two of that will come off for good behavior; so I'll really get eighteen years. At the end of that time I'll come out with one hundred and nine thousand dollars—rich for life and able to retire at forty-five years. In other words, while in prison I'll be working for a good stiff salary, something really worth while. Very few men are able to retire at forty-five."

Ashe readily realized the truth of this statement. It was the point of view of a man to whom mere prison had few terrors, a man content to remain immured for twenty years for a consideration. He turned and spoke aside to the two directors again.

"But I'll tell you what I will do," said Dolan, after a pause. "If you'll fix it so I get only two years, say, I'll give you half the money."

There was silence. Detective Mallory strolled along the corridor beyond the view of the prisoner and summoned President Ashe to his side by a jerk of his head.

"Agree to that," he said. "Perhaps he'll really give up."

"But it wouldn't be possible to arrange it; would it?" asked Ashe.

"Certainly not," said the detective; "but agree to it. Get your money if you can, and then we'll nail him anyhow."

Ashe stared at him a moment vaguely indignant at the treachery of the thing. Then greed triumphed. He walked back to the cell.

"We'll agree to that, Mr. Dolan," he said briskly; "fix a two years' sentence for you in return for half the money."

Dolan smiled a little. "All right, go ahead," he said. "When sentence of two years is pronounced and a first class lawyer arranges it for me so that the matter can never be reopened, I'll tell you where you can get your half."

"But of course you must tell us that now," said Ashe.

Dolan smiled cheerfully. It was a taunting, insinuating, accusing sort of smile, and it informed the bank president that the duplicity contemplated was discovered. Ashe was silent for a moment, then blushed.

"Nothing doing," said Dolan, and he retired into a recess of his cell as if his interest in the matter was at an end.

"But—but we need the money now," stammered Ashe. "It was a large sum, and the theft has crippled us considerably."

"All right," said Dolan carelessly. "The

sooner I get two years the sooner you get it."

"How could it be—be fixed?"

"I'll leave that to you."

That was all. The bank president and the two directors went out, fuming impotently.

"What did Dolan do with the money?" Hutchinson Hatch was asking of Professor Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen, The Thinking Machine. The distinguished scientist and logician was sitting with his head pillowed on a cushion and with squint eyes turned upward. "It isn't in the flat. Everything indicates that it was hidden somewhere else."

"And Dolan's wife?" inquired The Thinking Machine in his perpetually irritated voice. "It seems conclusive that she has no idea where it is?"

"She has been put through the third degree," explained the reporter, "and if she had known she would probably not have told."

"Is she living in the flat now?"

"No; she is stopping with her sister. The flat is under lock and key. Mallory has the key. He has shown the utmost care in everything he has done. Dolan has not been permitted to write or see his wife, for fear he would let her know somehow where the money is; he has not been permitted to communicate with anybody at all, not even a lawyer. He did see President Ashe and two directors of the bank, but naturally he wouldn't give them a message for his wife."

The Thinking Machine was silent. For five, ten, twenty, minutes he sat, with long, slender fingers pressed tip to tip, squinting unblinkingly at the ceiling. Hatch waited patiently.

"Of course," said the scientist at last, "one hundred and nine thousand dollars, even in large bills, would make a considerable bundle and would be extremely difficult to hide in a place that has been gone over so often. We may suppose, therefore, that it isn't in the flat. What have the detectives learned as to Dolan's whereabouts after the robbery and before he was taken?"

"Nothing," replied Hatch—"nothing—absolutely. He seemed to disappear off the earth for a time. That time, I suppose, was when he was disposing of the money. His plans were evidently well laid."

"It would be possible, of course, by the simple rules of logic, to sit still here and ultimately locate the money," remarked The Thinking Machine musingly; "but it would take a long time. We might begin, for instance, with the idea that he contemplated flight. When? By rail or steamer? The answers to those questions would, in a way, enlighten us as to the probable location of the money; because, remember, it would have to be placed where it was readily accessible in case of flight. But the process would be a long one. Perhaps it would be best to make Dolan tell us where he hid it."

"It would if he would tell," agreed the reporter; "but he is reticent to a degree that is maddening when the money is mentioned."

"Naturally," remarked the scientist. "That really doesn't matter. I have no doubt he will inform me."

So Hatch and The Thinking Machine called upon Detective Mallory. They found him in deep abstraction. He glanced up at the intrusion with an appearance almost of relief. He knew intuitively what it was.

"If you can find out where that money is, professor," he declared emphatically, "I'll—I'll—Well, you can't."

The Thinking Machine squinted into the official eyes thoughtfully, and the corners of his straight mouth were drawn down disapprovingly. "I think perhaps there has been a little too much caution here, Mr. Mallory," he said. "I have no doubt Dolan will inform me where the money is. As I understand it, his wife is practically without means?"

"Yes, she is living with her sister."

"And he has asked several times to be permitted to write to or see her?"

"Yes, dozens of times."

"Well, now suppose you do let him see her?" suggested The Thinking Machine.

"Lord! that's just what he wants!" blurted the detective. "If he ever sees her, I know he will, in some way, by something he says, by a gesture, or a look, inform her where the money is. As it is now, I know she doesn't know where it is."

"Well, if he informs her, won't he also inform us?" demanded The Thinking Machine tartly.

"If Dolan wants to convey knowledge of the whereabouts of the money to his wife, let him talk to her—let him give her the information. I daresay if she is clever enough to interpret a spoken word as a clue to where the money is, I am too."

The detective thought that over. He knew this crabbled little scientist with the enormous head of old; and he knew, too, some of the amazing results he had achieved by methods wholly unlike those known to the police. But in this case he was frankly in doubt.

"This way," The Thinking Machine continued. "Get the wife here, let her pass Dolan's cell and speak to him so that he will know that it is she, then let her carry on a conversation with him while she is beyond his sight. Have a stenographer, without the knowledge of either, take down just what is said, word for word. Give me a transcript of the conversation, and hold the wife on some pretext until I can study it a little. If he gives her a clue, I'll get the money."

There was not the slightest trace of egotism in the irritable tone. It seemed merely a statement of fact.

Detective Mallory at last consented to the